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AUTHOR Twombly, Susan B.
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ABSTRACT

Career lines leading to top-level administrative positions in two-year colleges were identified, based on data for 193 presidents, 271 chief academic officers, 221 chief student affairs officers, and 207 chief business officers. The analysis was based on internal labor market theory, and data were obtained from a 1984 national study of two-year college administrators' careers. Using a categorization scheme for possible position titles, curriculum vitae of respondents in each administrative position were analyzed to determine the types of positions that were held prior to the current positions. Except for presidents, the administrators came from various types of positions. Two-year college presidents largely came from top executive positions or chief academic officer positions. Positions that appeared frequently in the careers of chief student affairs officers were directors of counseling and financial aid, associate/assistant chief student affairs, and counselors. Chief business officers came most often from outside sources (business and industry and school administration). Comparisons to previous research are made. Also considered are implications of career lines for individuals and two-year colleges as well as for theory and research on careers in higher education. (SW)

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Career Lines of Top-Level Two-Year College Administrators: Implications for Leadership in a New Era

Susan B. Twombly

The University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS

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ASHE Association for the Study of Higher Education
The George Washington University/One Dupont Circle, Suite 630/Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 296-2597

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Career Lines of Top-Level Two-Year College Administrators:
Implications for Leadership in a New Era

Abstract

Over time sequences of positions (career lines) are formed in organizations by which individuals are introduced to the demands of the next higher position in the sequence before they actually move to the position. In this way organizations ensure that a pool of trained individuals able to assume leadership roles is constinually available, and this task is accomplished as efficiently as possible. There are two common ideas about the careers of administrators in postsecondary education organizations: They are unstructured like careers of professionals such as physicians, or they are highly structured. There is littlle empirical support for either position. Using internal labor market theory as the conceptual framework, the present study identified the career lines by which two-year college presidents, chief academic officers, chief student affairs officers, and chief business officers have risen to their current positions. Results were discussed in terms of implications for individuals, two-year colleges and for internal labor market theory.

Career Lines of Top-Level Two-Year College Administrators

If the reader was asked to define the term career, the response would probably go something like this: career is what one does for a living; one's job; composite of several jobs held by a person; or a job or life's work to which one aspires. On the other hand, if the question was how should one prepare to become a college president; the answer would probably be that the person should first be a faculty member, then a department chair, and then a dean. Assuming that the advice was correct, why would such advice be given in the first place? Most likely the advice-giver would give this recommedation because he or she has observed that persons who are or have been presidents have followed this sequence of positions en route to the presidency. This latter case demonstrates an organizational career--a sequence of related positions that are common to a portion of the labor force (Spilerman, 1977). The above senario illustrates that careers may be viewed from either a personal or an organizational perspective, and that the distinction is an important one. Organizational careers are structures of organizations that serve important functions for organizations, and thus they are an important subject of inquiry. Furthermore, organizational careers in colleges and universities have received little attention as a subject of inquiry. The purpose of this study was to identify career lines, as one aspect of the structure of organizational careers, of top-level two-year college administrators. A secondary purpose was to compare the results of this study with those of earlier studies to note trends in the evolution of administrative careers in two-year colleges.

Leadership is a critical need of all organizations, and in order to maintain stability, organizations must adopt means of assuring that a sufficient group of individuals is ready to assume leadership positions (Martin and Strauss, 1968). Recruitment, training, turnover, and job motivation are some of the tasks facing organizations that are an important part of developing leadership. Career lines, paths, job ladders, or mobility clusters are various terms used to describe one means by which organizations insure that a sufficient pool of trained (as defined by

the organization) personnel is ready to assume leadership positions. Career lines[1] serve to facilitate recruitment, socialization, motivation, and to reduce the costs of turnover in as efficient way as possible. In short, career lines are one of the means used by organizations to allocate human resources.

Weber was probably the first to suggest the advantages of careers as structures of organizations. The role that Weber attributed to careers (promotion systems operating within the clearly defined hierarchy of ofices) as a key to the permanency of bureaucratic organizations is well known. However, it is from the work of Glaser (1968) and his associates, who undertook the task of developing a theory of organizational careers; and from internal labor market theorists that the nature and importance of career lines and of how they function to meet important organizational needs becomes clearer.

Glaser (1968) introduced the function of organizational careers:

> In general, organizations obtain work from people by offering them some kind of career within their structures. The operation of organizations, therefore, depends on people's assuming a career orientation toward them. To generate this orientation, organizations distribute rewards, working conditions, and prestige to their members according to career level; thus these benefits are properties of their organizational careers" (p. 1).

Becker and Strauss (1956) described careers as streams on which personel flow through organizations from positions of low prestige to positions of higher prestige. Positions either offered training or opportunities for further mobility or they served as barriers to movement. Central to the Becker and Strauss argument was the concept of career as a socialization process in which one position prepares an individual to hold succeeding positions. How did these streams or organizational careers develop? The paths which lead to top management positions became institutionalized over time (Martin and Strauss, 1956).

More recently, a group of structural economists and sociologists have focused their attention on the dynamics of internal labor markets as a framework for explaining income

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[1] This term is preferred over terms such as job ladders because it allows for horizontal as well as vertical movement, whereas the term job ladder implies a hierarchically ordered movement from lower rungs to higher rungs in the organization.

differences, career mobility, and discrimination in the labor force. While most frequently employed in studies of income differences and discrimination, internal labor market theory offers the potential of explaining a broader range of organizational phenomena and, in particular, provides a framework through which to examine the structure of organizational careers, and more specifically career lines. In fact, some of the most important recent studies of career mobility have employed internal labor market concepts (e. g., Spilerman, 1977; Geertner, 1980).

Internal labor markets are structures governed by formal and informal "rules". Careers and career mobility are structured in part because there are limited positions through which employees enter the labor market. By limiting entry, internal labor markets offer employees protection from outside competition; for in the strictest case, workers from other markets must begin at designated entry points, which are usually low-level positions in the organizational hierarchy. The minimum level of education necessary for entry is set by the requirements of the entry position. In addition, entry positions are the points of contact with external markets, and the number and level of entry positions reflect the degree of openness of the internal market. In internal labor markets chains of jobs are formed that minimize costs of adjustment to new positions for both employer and employee. In this way, individuals are introduced to the skills of higher positions before actually moving to them. Consequently, both organizations and employees benefit from internal labor markets.

Internal labor markets are generally thought to be of two types: that which is confined to a single firm--the firm internal labor market; and the occupational internal labor market that includes one or more related occupations and that operates across more than one organization (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Althauser and Kalleberg, 1981). The administrative positions in two-year colleges constitute one or more occupational internal labor markets. Furthermore, for the purposes of this study, all two-year colleges were assumed to be more like each other than they were like other types of organizations, and thus the label organization in this study referred to the collectivity of all two-year colleges rather than to one single college.

Job ladders or career lines, and mobility up the ladder or movement along career lines, are two of the important characteristics of internal labor markets. The other two, which were not dealt with in this study, are entry positions and education (Althauser and Kalleberg, 1981). Entry positions and education were not dealt with in this study. As structures of organizations, career lines have properties such as entry ports, assessment positions, and ceiling positions (Spilerman, 1977; Gaertner, 1980). Gaertner (1980) observed that the mobility process inherent in organizational careers was a process that allowed organizations to "adapt to current and future demands through the allocation of human resources" (p. 97). For Spilerman (1977) career lines were the strategic link between organizations and the socioeconomic achievements of individuals. It is essential that organizations understand how careers are structured--what positions have become institutionalized as the training required for top leadership positions--in order that organizational adaptation through the allocation of human resources can be accomplished.

It was the basic assumption of this study that for two-year colleges, as for other organizations, career lines become institutionalized so as to provide leadership necessary to accomplish the goals of the organization. However, in contrast to business and industrial organizations, where there has been much attention to career mobility in relation to organizational functioning (e. g., Ouichi, 1981; Pfeffer, 1981; Kanter, 1983); there has been relatively little scholarly attention paid to the role of career lines and career mobility in the development of leaders in colleges and universities. Are the careers of college administrators individualistic like those of professionals, or are they highly structured like careers in bureaucratic hierarchies and, as Cohen and March (1974) suggested, for college presidents?

In fact, we know very little about careers as structures of postsecondary institutions. Cavanaugh (1971) could not identify any career paths, defined as sequences of related positions, leading to the two-year college presidency in 1970. In their study of ivy league middle managers Bess and Lodahl (1969) used very gross categories of positions (e. g., faculty, similar job, different type of job) to conclude that a high proportion of their sample had come to their present

jobs from similar jobs and from inside the institution. Gross and McCann (1981) found that background and career variables, such as previously held positions, improved the rate of prediction of whether the current deanship or vice presidency position was academic or non-academic.

Using data from a national study of administrators careers, Moore et al. (1984) and Salimbene (1982) approached the study of four-year college and university presidents', provosts', and deans' careers from a structural perspective, and they identified career paths leading to each top position. In both studies the career histories of administrators were tested against a normative career path suggested by Cohen and March (1974). A number of career paths, in addition to the hypothesized normative path, were found to lead to the presidency, provostship, and deanship. Their work constitutes a pioneering effort to examine careers of college and university administrators as structures of the organizations. However, both studies lacked a theoretical framework from which to interpret the meaning of career structures for colleges and universities.

Other than the five studies mentioned, most studies of careers in colleges and universities have been largely descriptive and have approached careers from an individual rather than an organizational point of view. For example, scholars of two-year colleges were particularly interested in identifying potential sources of supply of administrators, and thus Roberts (1964), Johnston (1965) and Schultz (1965), Wing (1970), and Atwell (1980) identified previously held positions of two-year college administrators. These and many other authors identified personal and educational characteristics of administrators.

Any discussion of careers as structures of organizations must take into account the unique characteristics of colleges and universities as distinct from other types of organizations. Colleges and universities are generally characterized by flat hierarchies (Scott, 1978; Estler & Miner, 1981; Holmes, 1982). Thus there may be few clearly defined steps upward. Other ways in which career mobility may be accomplished in colleges and universities include mobility which occurs as the result of increased job responsibility (Estler & Miner, 1981); change in position titles to

reflect excellent work (Scott, 1978); job mobility by leaving the institution; and mobility by downward progression (Scott, 1978). Birnbaum (1971) explained mobility by demotion in terms of an exchange value in which a person might move from a higher status position at a lower status institution to a lower status position at a higher status institution. As Holmes (1982) observed, "progress may be actually determined by more subtle, intangible, and culturally specific criteria" (p. 31). The present study acknowledges these factors but given its exploratory nature, did not attempt to address them empirically. However, interpretation of career mobility in postsecondary organizations must be approached with some caution.

Framed by the work of the organizational career and internal labor market theorists, the purpose of the present study was to identify and describe the career lines leading to the following top-level administrative positions in two-year colleges: president, chief academic officer, chief student affairs officer, and chief business officer. Career lines were defined "as sequences of related positions that are common to a portion of the labor force and for which there is a high probability of movement from one position to another" (Spilerman, 1977, p. 560). Thus, for this study career lines were considered to be an empirical regularity and as such, were distinguished from an individual's career history. Results are discussed in terms of implications for individuals and for the organization. Two-year colleges have a dynamic history in which leadership has played an important role. Understanding the implications of career lines for leadership of these organizations whose trademark is adaptability to change is essential.

Data Source and Method of Analysis

Data used to determine career lines of two-year college administrators were obtained from the vita portion of Today's Academic Leaders, a national study of two-year college administrators' careers.[2] A thirty-five percent random sample of each of seven positions at all regionally accredited public and private two-year colleges in the United States (including Alaska

[2] The study, Today's Academic Leaders: A National Study of Administrators in Community and Junior Colleges, was carried out during the spring of 1984 by The Center for the Study of Higher Education, The Pennsylvania State University under the direction of Dr. Kathryn M. Moore.

and Hawaii) was drawn. Career lines of two-year college presidents, chief academic officers, chief student affairs officers, and chief business officers were the focus of this study. HEGIS administrative position codes were used to identify each administrative population thus eliminating the problem of various titles used by different institutions to represent the same type of position. An overall 75 percent response rate resulted in the following sample sizes: presidents, 193; chief academic officers, 271; chief student affairs officers, 221; chief business officers, 207. On the vita portion of the survey, respondents were asked to list up to ten professional positions in reverse chronological order. As accurate curriculum vitae are a way of life for academic administrators, typical concerns about the accuracy of retrospective life history data were not considered problematic. From these data career lines of presidents, chief academic officers, chief student affairs officers, and chief business officers were determined.

Using Spilerman's definition of career line the analytical task was one of identifying a method of determining "sequences of related positions". The task was complicated by the fact that the data were cross-sectional thus precluding the use of methodologically sophisticated transition matrices and log-linear analysis possible with personnel records (see Gaertner, 1980). Longitudinal data and transition matrices permit the determination of probabilities of movement from one position to the next. Cross-sectional data have many advantages, but they do necessitate identifying other methods of data analysis.

Spilerman (1977) suggested two complementary perspectives for studying careers. From the first perspective, one studies career lines by begining with entry positions and by tracing career lines forward from the entry point. For the present study it was most appropriate to utilize the second strategy and begin with a critical position in the organization and use information about earlier positons to trace career paths back from the current position. The range of possible positions were categorized based on conceptual arguments and the description of positions provided by the Compensation Survey Titles (In Jones & Drews, 1977). The entire procedure for identifying career lines was described fully in Twombly (1985).

Briefly, using the categorization scheme for possible position titles, the curriculum vitae of respondents in each administrative focal position (president, chief academic officer, chief student affairs officer, and chief business officers) were analyzed to determine the types of positions that were held immediately prior to the current positions (hereafter called the first previous position). Then the second position prior to the current position was analyzed for each category of the first previous position. This procedure was conducted for each of the nine possible positions listed on respondents' curriculum vitae.

In the process of identifying career lines, positions held in postsecondary organizations were distinguished from those held outside of postsecondary organizations. No distinction was made between positions held in two-year or four-year institutions for the purposes determining career lines. There were both conceptual and practical reasons for taking this stance. Conceptually, postsecondary administrative positions are similar enough, regardless of institution type, that positions held in four-year colleges and universities are likely to affect career mobility in two-year colleges. And practically, enough administrators in each of the sample moved in and out of positions in both two-year and four-year institutions that elimination of those cases that had four-year experience would have substantially reduced sample sizes.

Using the strategy outlined above, sequences of positions each of the groups of administrators were most likely to come from to their current positions were observed. First, however, a decision as to what portion of a labor market following a sequence of positions was necessary to constitute a career line had to be made. The literature provided no particular guidance on this matter, and consequently, .10 of each sample holding a first previous position was set as the criterion for the first previous position; and .05 of the total sample under consideration was used for earlier positions in the career. Thus if .10, or 19, of the 193 presidents had come to their current positions immediately from chief academic officer positions, and 10 of these 19, or .05 of the total presidential sample came from faculty positions; a career line was identified that consisted of the presidency, a chief academic officer position preceded by a faculty position. Results are reported only for career lines that meet these specified criteria.

Two observations are necessary before reporting the results themselves. The first is that while the established criteria of .10 and .05 may seem low, the author was surprised at just how quickly careers fragmented, even using the relatively gross coding schemes devised. As a result, no career lines longer than four positions (including the current position) were identified. And in most cases, career lines were shorter than four positions. Furthermore, the fragmenting of career lines eliminated the possibility of analyzing career lines by age, gender, geographical region or other relevant control variables. Larger samples or purposive sampling techniques would be necessary to allow such critically important analyses.[3]

Second, it be must emphasized again that the methods of data analysis permitted observation of the probabilities of coming <u>from</u> certain positions of origin, even though it was not possible to observe probabilities of moving <u>to</u> certain destinations.

Results

Career lines that satisfied the earlier specified criteria of .10 of the sample holding a first previous position and .05 of the sample holding an earlier previous position are reported for each of the top-level administrative positions that were the focus of this study.

<u>President</u>. The career lines for the two-year college presidency are reported in Table 1. There were six categories of first previous positions possible for presidents: top executive[4], chief academic officer, line officer[5], administrative dean/director, faculty, and staff, which includes associate and assistant positions. As shown in Table 1, presidents were most likely to come directly from only two types of positions: top executive positions or chief academic officer positions. These are the only two positions that met the .10 criterion, and they were held by 118

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[3] The researchers were surprised by the low proportion of women and minorities represented in each administrative position studied. The low representation of these groups further compounded the problem of analyzing career lines by gender or racial/ethnic group.

[4] This category includes the positions of president, president of a campus in a multicampus system, and provost.

[5] Positions that are identified by the Compensation Survey Titles as reporting directly to the president. The chief academic officer position is treated separately and is not included in this category.

Table 1

Career Lines of Internally Selected Two-Year College Presidents (n=118)

Current Position	1st Previous Position	2nd Previous Position	3rd Previous Position
President	Top Executive Positions (n=66)	Chief Academic Officer (n=16/.083)[a]	Other Administrative Position (n=13/.067)
		Top Executive Positions (n=15/.078)	Other Administrative Position (n=10/.052)
		Line Dean/Director (n=11/.057)	
		Outside (n=11/.057)	
	Total	53[b]	
	Chief Academic Officer (n=53)	Outside (n=12/.062)	
		Faculty (n=10/.052)	
	Total	22[c]	

[a] Proportion expressed as a proportion of the total 19[illegible] presidents.

[b] This total represents those among the 66 whose first previous position was top executive position who also fell into one of the longer career patterns meeting our .05 criterion.

[c] This total represents those among the 52 whose first previous position was chief academic office who also fell into one of the longer career patterns meeting our .05 criterion.

or .61 of the total 193 presidents. When the earlier careers of the presidents who held each of these first previous positions were analyzed longer sequences of positions leading to the two-year college presidency were identified.

Verbal description of each career line is awkward and may not add to the visual picture of career lines represented in Table 1. However, several summary comments are useful. First, it has already been noted that presidents were most likely to rise directly to their current positions from only two types of positions--top executive positions or chief academic officer positions. It is noteworthy that such a high proportion of current presidents rose to their current positions from top executive positions; thus making what appear to be lateral moves.

Second, two-year college presidents were not nearly as likely to have held the following first previous positions: line officer (n=13/.067); administrative dean/director (n=13/.067); faculty (n=10/.052); and staff (n=8/.041). Line officer positions, other than a chief academic officer position, were not a prevalent immediate source of presidents suggesting that other line officer positions may be ceiling positions. That is, they may be positions above which a person can not move in two-year college administration. Of course, moves from chief student affairs or chief business line officer positions to presidential career lines may occur earlier in careers. In fact, there was some support for this. One of the career lines identified for presidents included a previous top executive position and a line officer position at the second position prior to the current presidency.

Third, the career lines identified consist primarily of administrative positions. This was particularly true for the career lines leading to the current presidency through a top executive position. In addition 15 presidents have held at least three top executive administrative posts in postsecondary education organizations. It appears that previous administrative experience is important for two-year college presidents.

Fourth, very few of the presidents in the present study were able to move directly from faculty positions to the presidency. Nor were faculty positions prominent in any of the career lines identified. Thus while faculty positions appeared as entry positions for a substantial

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proportion of presidents rising to the presidency through either top executive or chief academic officer positions (Twombly, 1985), movement out of the faculty to administrative positions must have occurred fairly early careers.

In summary, six sequences of positions leading to the two-year college presidency through top executive positions or chief academic officer positions were identified. A different trend in the career lines of two-year college chief academic officers was noted.

Chief Academic Officer. The first previous positions of chief academic officers were classified into eight categories: chief academic officer, staff, administrative dean/director, department head, academic dean, faculty, line officer, and top executive position. As reported in Table 2, current chief academic officers were most likely to be selected from five different types of positions. A total of 187 current chief academic officers (.70) came to their current position from one of these five positions. However, there was little commonality in their earlier careers. The one longer sequence of positions that satisfied the specified criteria represented what might be termed a "traditional" career sequence: ,to chief academic officer from department head, and to department head from faculty.

Some observations can be made from the data reported in Table 2. As for presidents, chief academic officers were most likely to have come directly to current positions from positions of the same title. Staff positions appeared to be important in the career lines of chief academic officers. It is perhaps surprising that current chief academic officers are nearly equally likely to have come from administrative dean and academic dean positions. This is probably explained by the fact that two-year colleges are typically less likely than four-year colleges and universities to have different colleges or schools and deans to head them.

Again analysis of the least likely first previous positions is interesting. While some faculty do move directly to the chief academic officer position (n=24/.090), this sequence did not meet the established .10 criterion. Neither were current chief academic officers likely to come from other line officer positions (n=16/.059). Thus we can conclude that there was little horizontal movement among line officer positions. Finally, some of what appeared to be

Table 2

Career Lines of Internally Selected
Chief Academic Officers (n=186)

Current Position	1st Previous Position	2nd Previous Position
Chief Academic Officer	Chief Academic Officer (n=53/.198)[a]	
	Associate/Assistant/Staff (n=39/.146)	
	Administrative Dean (n=32/.112)	
	Department Head (n=32/.112)	Faculty (n=15/.056)
	Academic Dean (n=30/.112)	

[a] Proportion is expressed as proportion of the total 268 chief academic officers.

"demotion" was noted. That is, 13 (.048) current chief academic officers held a top executive position at their first previous position.

In summary, analysis of career histories of two-year college chief academic officers revealed that they came directly to their current positions from a wide range of positions, but that there was little commonality in their earlier careers. Thus, the career lines identified are short two-position sequences. The only exception to this is a career line featuring movement to the chief academic post from a department head position and to that position from a faculty position.

Chief Student Affairs Officer. Analysis of career lines of the chief student affairs position revealed different patterns still. See Table 3. First previous positions of chief student affairs officers were classified into six categories: staff, chief student affairs, administrative dean/director, student affairs dean/director, faculty, and line officer[6]. As observed in Table 3, four first previous positions satisfied the established .10 criterion. Current chief student affairs officers were most likely to have come to their current post from staff positions (n=55/.250); from chief student affairs positions (n=45/.205); from administrative dean/director positions (n=37/.168); and from student affairs dean/director positions (n=23/.105). A total of 160 or .73 of the 220 current chief student affairs officers held one of these four first previous positions.

For this position it was also possible to identify some specific positions that appeared to be important in career lines of chief student affairs officers. Counseling positions (n=19) were commonly held staff positions among the 55 chief student affairs officers who rose to their current post through a staff position, and another 16 of this group held associate/assistant chief student affairs positions. Furthermore, 11 of the 23 chief student affairs officers, whose first previous positions were student affairs director positions, were directors of counseling, and 6 were directors of financial aid before moving to their current positions. This may reflect the fact that student affairs operations in two-year college do not include the variety of types of positions

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[6] The line officer category includes all administrative positions that report directly to the president except the chief student affairs officer position.

Table 3

Career Lines of Internally Selected Chief Student Affairs Officers (n=160)

Current Position	1st Previous Position	2nd Previous Position
Chief Student Affairs Officer	Associate/Assistant/ Staff (n=55/.250)[a]	Associate/Assistant/ Staff (n=16/.072)
		Outside (n=15/.068)
	Chief Student Affairs Officer (n=45/.205)	Associate/Assistant Staff (n=16/.072)
	Administrative Dean/ Director (n=37/.168)	Administrative Dean/ Director (n=13/.059)
	Student Affairs Dean/Director (n=23/.105)	

[a] Proportion is expressed as proportion of the total 220 chief student affairs officers.

found in four-year colleges and universities, and that counseling and financial aid are the main student affairs positions in two-year colleges.

Four longer sequences of positions leading to the chief student affairs post were identified. Again several observations are important. First, the staff category of positions was important in the career lines of chief student affairs officers. And in fact, staff positions were the most common source of current chief student affairs officers. The fact that a first previous staff position was preceded by another staff position suggests that a more typical hierarchical ordering of positions exists for the chief student affairs post than has been observed in career lines of the other top positions. Second, for chief student affairs administrators, as for presidents and chief academic officers, other chief student affairs positions served as a prominent source of current administrators. Third, other line officer and faculty positions were the least likely sources of chief student affairs officers. A clear picture of little horizontal movement among line officer positions immediately prior to the current position is beginning to emerge. This is not to say that such movement did not occur earlier in careers.

The analysis of career lines of chief student affairs officers can be summarized by saying that there were four longer sequences of positions common to at least .05 of the chief student affairs sample. Staff positions played an important role in the career lines of chief student affairs officers. Not only was the staff category the single most commonly held type of first previous position among the student affairs officers who moved to their current position from within postsecondary education, but the staff category also appeared in two of the longer sequences of positions. Furthermore, it was possible to identify specific positions that appear frequently in the careers of chief student affairs officers: director of counseling, director of financial aid, associate/assistant chief student affairs, and counseling positons.

Chief Business Officer. And finally, career lines of the chief business officer position were identified. The first observation to be made about the careers of two-year college chief business officers is that 75 (.40) came directly from positions outside of postsecondary education to their current positions. (This compares to approximately .10 of the administrators in each of

the other three positions who came directly to their current positions from outside of postsecondary education.) Postsecondary positions were categorized into five groups in order to anlyze the first previous positions: chief business officer, staff, administrative dean/director, faculty, and line officer.[7] Career line analysis for chief business officers is reported in Table 4.

As can be seen, current chief business officers who held postsecondary first previous positions were most likely to come to their current post directly from another chief business officer position (n=46/.227); staff position (n=30/.148); or administrative dean/director position (n=21/.103). Chief business administrators were only slightly less likely to come directly from faculty post (n=20/.099). The only longer sequence of positions common to .059 of the sample was that of chief business officer from another chief business position, and to this position from outside. It should be noted that an attempt was made to categorize business director positions, such as comptroller and bursar, as one of the categories of first previous positions, but there were insufficient numbers of current chief business officers who had held one of these types of positions to warrant a separate category.

There is relatively little to be said about the career lines of chief business officers that is not apparent in the data in Table 4. As for the other three top-level administrative positions, chief business officers were likely to have moved directly to their current position from a position of the same title. It also appears that, of any of the four administrative positions studied, chief business officers were more likely than the others to come directly from faculty positions.

In summary, the career lines of chief business officers are straigtforward. Outside sources were the most common direct sources of current chief business officers. Positions in business and industry (n=29/.143) and school administration (n=22/.108) were frequent immediate outside sources of chief business officers. However, other than the three common first previous positions there was little commonality in their earlier careers.

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[7] The line officer category included all positions reporting to the president except the chief business officer position.

Table 4

Career Lines of Internally Selected
Chief Business Officers (n=97)

Current Position	1st Previous Position	2nd Previous Position
Chief Business Officer	Chief Business Officer (n=46/.227)[a]	Outside (n=12/.059)
	Associate/Assistant/ Staff (n=30/.148)	
	Administrative Dean/ Director (n=21/.103)	

[a] Proportion is the proportion of the total 203 chief business officers.

Before moving on to a discussion of the implications of the findings concerning the career lines of top-level two-year college administrators, there are several overall observations that should be made about the structure of career lines of top-level administrative positions in two-year colleges. The first general observation is that while there were some career lines leading to the administrative positions studied, in the form of career lines; careers of two-year college administrators are not highly structured. That is, for three of the four positions studied, current administrators came from a variety of types of positions. The one exception was the presidency. In this case there were only two prevalent sources of two-year college presidents. Furthermore, career lines that were common to a portion of each sample were relatively short. In fact, little commonality in careers beyond first previous positions was apparent.

Second, presidents were likely to come from only two sources: top executive positions and from chief academic officer positions. Third and related to the second is the observation that line officer positions were not likely sources of chief academic officers, chief student affairs officers or chief business officers. Thus little horizontal movement at the line officer level was noted. If interarea mobility (e. g., from student affairs to academic affairs) occurs in college administration, it must occur at lower levels in the administrative hierarchy. The final observation concerns the high rate of what appeared to be lateral movement from positions of the same title to the current positions noted for each of the four top-level administrative groups studied. Of course, what appears to be lateral movement is likely to reflect movement to a larger institution and to a job with additional responsibility.

Discussion

Discussion of the results of analysis of career lines of top-level two-year college administrators is organized around four points: a comparison of present data with what is known about career lines of two-year college administrators from earlier times; implications of career lines for individuals; implications of career lines for two-year colleges; and finally, implications for internal labor market theory and analysis of career lines in colleges and universities.

First, what differences can be seen in the careers of presidents in 1984 as compared to the careers of presidents in earlier time periods? One difference is that the proportion of presidents moving to presidencies at the time of study from an earlier president's post appears to have increased. Studies of presidents done in the 1960's revealed that approximately 10 percent of the presidents studied held an earlier presidency (Roberts, 1964; Johnston, 1965; Ferrari & Berte, 1970). More recent studies showed that at least two presidencies were common to between 15 and 20 percent of presidents (Wing, 1971; Atwell, 1980). Over one-third of the presidents in the present study have held a previous top executive position immediately prior to assuming their current presidencies. The chief academic officer position has been a major source of presidents; and the present study shows, if anything a slight decrease in the proportion of presidents who had held the chief academic post prior to assuming their current position. One word of caution is necessary in making these comparisons from such a wide range of studies. And that is it is not possible to be sure just what positions were included in the presidential category. The results of the present study may reflect such a large increase in the proportion moving from one presidency to the current one because of the operational definition of the top executive category.

A final comparison is suggested by Cavanaugh's attempt to identify "routes" leading to the presidency (1971). He concluded:

> if "routes" are grossly interpreted as junior college, public school or college/university--and only the position immediately prior to the presidency is analyzed--the "routes" described.....are valid. If, however, "routes" are interpreted as specific and parallel job sequences and more than one preceding position is considered, "routes" do not exist (pp. 64, 67).

In the present study a few career lines were identified that were common to a portion of each sample, and it was not necessary to resort to such gross coding schemes as suggested by Cavanaugh to do so. However, the career lines identified in the present case were not followed by large proportions of each group of administrators. Perhaps we are seeing that, as Martin and Strauss (1956) suggested, career lines become institutionalized over time. The present sudy confirms

the importance of the first previous position in characterizing the career lines of two-year college adminsitrators.

In summary, citing data from earlier studies of two-year college administrators, an increase in the proportion of presidents who came to their current positions from other top executive positions was noted. And furthermore, there is some evidence of the emergence of career lines since the Cavanaugh study in the early 1970s. The chief academic officer position has been and continues to be an important "springboard" to the presidency.

Implications for individuals. So what does any of this mean? Why go to the trouble of identifying career lines in the first place? The second point of discussion concerns the implications that identification of career lines have for individuals planning a career in two-year colleges. To begin with, it is important for prospective administrators to realize that there is a difference between organizational careers and individual careers. And that, perhaps even more importantly, two-year colleges, like other organizations, are characterized by structured organizational careers as evidenced by the existence of career lines. For administrative aspirants this suggests that hard work and ability alone will not enable a person to move to the top. There are some positions that serve as more prominent sources of top-level administrative positions than others. Here it is important to reemphasize the caveat entered earlier. And that is, for this study, career lines were determined by analyzing positions backwards from the current position; and individuals plan careers forward. So caution must be exercised when using this data for career planning.

While individuals can draw their own conclusions from the career line data, four observations are important. First, is the high degree of "lateral" movement observed in all four positions. Positions of the same title were prominent sources of administrators in each of the four administrative positions studied. The job-hunting experience of an individual who is currently vice-president for academic affairs at a top-rated two-year college is instructive in both interpreting the propensity of lateral movement and for suggesting implications of such a trend. This individual has been searching for a presidency for a while, but is finding that in

competitions for chief executive posts at colleges of equal size and reputation he loses out to individuals who have held presidencies of other, perhaps smaller institutions. This individual wants to hold one presidency and move on to something else, but is feeling that it is almost becoming necessary to secure the presidency of a smaller college before being able to move to the top post in a larger. For the present study, size and prestige of the institution of the previous presidency were not analyzed so we can only suggest that the example may illustrate what is going on. If this example reflects reality then it is important for individuals to consider that there may be differences in presidencies and that a top post in a smaller insitution may be an important step to a more prestigious presidency.

A second observation for individuals who aspire to top administrative posts is that while the chief academic officer, chief student affairs, and chief business officer position draw from multiple sources; the presidency appears to be served by only two major sources--the top executive and chief academic officer positions. Individuals who have sights set on becoming a two-year college president should perhaps attend to this finding. However, concerns for the meaning of this trend are expressed when organizational implications are considered.

The third major observation for individuals concerns the lack of apparent horizontal movement that occurs at the level of the line officer positions. The results of this study suggest that there is little movement among functional areas of the two-year college. In each case of the chief academic, chief student affairs, and chief business officer positions, the other line officer category of positions was one of the least likely sources of administrators. For example, chief academic officers are not likely to have been chief student affairs officers before assuming their current position. Individuals are apparently not likely to move from one line officer position to another unless they do so at earlier stages in the career. This finding provides some support for the notion that each functional area (e.g., student affairs, academic affairs) constitutes a separate internal labor market that protects its employees by holding out high level positions for those from within their own area. Individuals entering one or the other areas from other markets have to do so at lower level jobs.

The chief academic officer position, does appear to lead upward. That is the chief academic officer position is a major source of presidents. However, the findings of this study suggest that the chief student affairs and chief business officer positions appear to be ceiling positions. That is they are positions above which careers do not advance as they are not prominent immediate sources of presidents. It is not the opinion of this author that individuals who aspire to higher level positions should abandon student affairs or business affairs. Rather, the preferred course of action would seem to be that (if one assumes that one way that organizations motivate and obtain commitment from employees is by holding out the potential of advancement) presidential selection committees be "educated" to consider other sources of presidents.

A fourth observation relevant for individuals has to do with the general inability to isolate specific positions that served as major steps in career lines (with exception of the presidential career line, that is). For the chief academic officer, chief student affairs officer, and chief business officer positions, it may be that the level and general type of position held is more important to upward mobility than is holding a specific post. For the chief student affairs position, experience in some specific positions (within the broad categories of positions) was important.

Implications for two-year colleges. Each of these observations has equally important implications for two-year colleges as organizations, and thus the third major focus of the discussion concerns the implications of internal labor markets for two-year colleges.

The identified career lines revealed sets of experiences that two-year colleges have identified as being important preparation for each top-level position studied. In terms of internal labor market theory sequences of positions become ordered so that one position provides training for the next higher position. In this way costs of adjustment to new positions are reduced and the organization provides for leadership in as efficient a way as possible. Following this line of argument, the most efficient means of providing leadership would be obtained through highly regualrized career lines such as found in civil service job structures.

The relatively few and short career lines leading to top administrative posts in two-year colleges suggest that a degree of balance between efficiency and breadth of experience is valued. Analysis of career lines leading to the presidency suggest that two-year colleges are more efficient in developing presidents than they are other top-level administrators. That is there are fewer sources of presidents who come from a narrow range of professional experience.

And what about the implications for the organization of the high degree of "lateral" movement noted? What could be more efficient for the organization than to be able to hire a president or chief academic officer who has already proven him/herself in a position of the same title? However, more research is needed on what motivates lateral movement and what the impact of this type of movement is for the management of human resources over the long run. In part the lateral movement may be a response to the relatively flat heirarchies which characterize educational organizations.

The most important implications of the findings for human resource management seem to come from the finding that the presidency draws from such a narrow range of sources. Again, if one assumes that organizations motivate and commit individuals by holding out the hope of promotion to top-level positions, then trustees and others responsible for the direction of two-year colleges must be concerned about the results of this study. If, in fact, line officer positions such as the chief student affairs officer positions are ceiling positions, then how does the organization motivate young, able chief student affairs officers to be committed to the organization? One way may be the lateral movement observed. One can move to a larger institution or to a position of more responsibility. But what then? Are good administrators lost to other types of organizations? Or do they become stuck in these ceiling positions? If the latter is the case, then keeping these administrators vital and committed is an important organizational task.

Furthermore, of the top-level administrative positions considered in this study, the chief student affairs officer position is the top-level administrative position that has the highest representation of both women and minorities. Approximately 40 percent of the chief student

affairs officers were women and 13 percent were members of racial or ethnic minority groups. Two-year colleges have a high proportion of female faculty and they serve great numbers of women and minority students. Consequently, it is beneficial that both women and minorities are well-represented in the student affairs administrative post. However, if this position is indeed a ceiling position, then it does not serve as a route to the top for these groups.

The question that must be asked is that are institutions that pride themselves on being democratic, comprehennsive, and flexible shortchanging themselves by drawing their presidents from such a narrow range of sources? Of course, early careers reflect a wide range of experiences, but it can be argued that it is the immediately preceding position that has the most salient influence on administrative perspective and behavior. If we accept this premise and the role of previous positions in socializing and otherwise preparing administrators, then we must be concerned about what appears to be a conservative approach to training presidents in two-year colleges.

Leadership has been a topic of much interest for colleges and universities as it has for all organizations. However, scholars of postsecondary education have paid relatively little attention to the role of careers of administrators and what they mean for institutions. As noted earlier, the basic purpose of sequencing of positions is that training or soicalization in one position will introduce the incumbent to the tasks of the next position in the the hierarchy. Thus, positions that serve as apporpriate training ground may vary depending on the demands of the higher positions. Scholars of the two-year college have noted that the mission of the two-year college may be changing. Martorana (1985) argued that the changing mission will require a different kind of leadership. And it follows that the positions that provide training for top leadership positions need to change also.

The question, then, for two-year colleges is will the career lines observed provide the kinds of experiences necessary for preparing leadership for a new generation of two-year colleges? Or should two-year colleges be even more efficient in selecting leaders through institutionalizing more highly structured career lines? The present research can not answer this

question. However, results of the present study provide a baseline of data about the career lines that exist in two-year colleges, and they provide a basis for discussion among those responsible for selecting administrators.

Implications for theory and for the study of careers in college and universities. Given the exploratory nature of structural analysis of career lines in postsecondary institutions and of occupational internal labor markets in general, it is important to make some observations about the study of career lines. First, from the high degree of lateral mobility observed for each of the four administrative positions in this study, we can conclude that to accurately describe career lines in postsecondary institutions all positions must be included. To include only the first presidency, when analyzing career lines leading to the presidency, would obviously obscure an important characteristic of administrative careers. The same is true for other top-level administrative positions.

Second, the little observed commonality in careers earlier than the first previous position gives some support to the notion of careers as Markov process. That is that the type of present position is some probability of status or position at the immediately preceding time and not of earlier positions in a career. At least for this study, the first previous position was the most important step in career lines.

However, the evidence of some structure beyond first previous positions may be indicative of the types of careers that might be expected in occupational internal labor markets. While Doeringer and Piore (1971) and Althauser and Kalleberg (1981) described this type of labor market, there has been little empirical investigation of the characteristics of occupational internal labor markets. Career lines in two-year colleges exhibit a balance between breadth and effiencicy or between lack of structure and a high degree of structure. The present study provides an interesting basis for further investigation of occupational internal labor markets in different settings and using different methodologies.

A third methodological consideration suggested by the present study is the necessity of large sample sizes. If one adopts Spilerman's definition of career lines as an empirical regularity

or sequences of positions common to a portion of the labor force, large samples are necessary in order to make much sense of the data. Even with the relatively large sample sizes employed in the current study, career lines fragmented so quickly as to make any meaningful analysis by gender, race, age, state, etc., impossible. Large sample sizes may be particularly important when studying careers in organizations such as colleges and universities in which there are a wide variety of positions and the administrative hierarchies are neither simple nor clearly defined. In addition, existing methodologies for studying career mobility are frequently suitable for large corporations that often have regular promotion systems. Ideal methods for engaging in comparable studies in postsecondary education organizations have yet to be identified. This is the subject of an entire paper in and of itself, and is only mentioned here as a subject that merits further work.

In conclusion, career lines by which two-year college presidents, chief academic officers, chief student affairs officers, and chief business officers have risen to their current positions have been identified. As structures of two-year colleges, career lines have implications for individuals planning administrative careers and for the functioning of two-year colleges. Scholars of leadership in postsecondary education institutions have overlooked for too long the importance of organizational careers in shaping the leadership of our colleges and universities. The present study has demonstrated that career lines can be identified, and furthermore, it has proposed that internal labor market theory provides a useful framework for discussing the implications of career lines for two-year colleges.

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